

The Glasgow Keelie

July 92



A Warning to our Leaders

It would be nice to think we had seen the last of Pat Lally and Charles Gray who have been given the heave by council colleagues.

That two such political conners should fall victim to the same corrupt backstairs manouevrings that put them in power in the first place, is only just. All along the line they failed the people of Glasgow and Strathclyde. They befriended the millionaire developer and profiteer rather than the people: creating a happy-land of yuppiedom in the midst of widespread industrial closure, unemployment, homelessness, savage cuts in services, and the poll tax. People like this we can well do without.

Throughout his career Gray enjoyed putting the boot into the poll tax non-payers, community education workers on strike and teachers who talked back. His proudest boast was that long before the Tories got into opting-out hospitals and schools, he had dreamed up the idea of local financial management. He was more than a wee bit miffed that Michael Forsyth should get all the credit!

Charlie's favourite charities were the £1 million a year police helicopter, big bucks for business development, a 37% pay rise to £105,000 for his Chief Executive, and of course the Year of Culture. Like Lally, he fancied himself as a cultural impresario. So he made the Region spend £20 million on the 1990 jamboree, then cut the same amount from the education budget the following year.

When you can switch millions from one budget heading to another without the mugs noticing, you can hire Sinatra any time.

But gangsters Lally and Gray are by no means quitting the field. The Labour Party mafia don't get thrown out - they only swap jobs. When Jean McFadden

vacates the COSLA presidency to take Lally's job as District Leader, Charles Gray will step into her job as COSLA president and Lally will take over as Deputy Leader of Glasgow District. It will be the same old gang in different posts. It is worth noting that back in 1977 when Lally lost his seat following the Cantley house-letting scandal, he was constantly to be found in whispered conference with his colleagues in the corridors of the City Chambers. Viewed in this light his famous political comeback was fairly inevitable. Scandal or no scandal, he was still calling the shots.

Promises

Will ex-railwayman Bob Gould, the new supremo of Strathclyde Region, be the first Labour leader to break with tradition and put the real needs of the Scottish people before the corporate greed of big business and the capitalist state? Certainly he is strong on promises.

There's a promise of more money for education: more money for the housing schemes: more money for the young unemployed: more money for policing "to fight the rising wave of crime in and around Glasgow".

Well, we're used to politicians and their promises. But with the revolutionary Left drawing increasing support from the deprived and alienated young, the Labour party might just be frightened enough to try and honour some of these pledges. All the same, the signs are not hopeful. Bob Gould was only in office a couple of days when he was running for cover with the old ready-made alibi that the Government's restrictions on local government spending "will make it very difficult".

You might think that the largest regional authority in Europe, with a budget in

excess of £2 billion - more than some nation states have to spend - could easily defy a hated Tory administration with no real mandate to govern in Scotland. Mr Gould, who was backed by a right-wing faction within the council, clearly has no such intention. He will run the Region like the Labour party hack he is, having no truck with grassroots politics and keeping socialism off the agenda. With the Tory axe soon to fall on Strathclyde Region, we need not expect much of anything, let alone defiance, from Mr Gould.

On the other hand, taking a leaf out of Mrs T's book, Jean McFadden is grudging with her promises. "We can't work miracles", she told reporters after a tour of Easterhouse, Drumchapel and Springburn where she was "shocked and surprised" to find "decay and dereliction, unemployment, poverty and a great drugs problem".

She must have been leading a sheltered life these past few years if the cancer of DSS poverty was news to her. She ought to read the *Keelie* more often. Or perhaps like Lally and the wretched crew that supported him throughout the obscenity of 1990, she dislikes grassroots socialist solutions - like the people's poll tax rebellion - because they not only work and work quickly but inevitably make political careerists like herself redundant.

No we are not looking for miracles. We are looking for justice. We want Glasgow for the people - not for a corrupt and long-discredited council and their friends in capitalist boardrooms.

We want what's ours, and the fight to get what's ours goes on whatever musical chairs they play in the council chamber. That is our message to Jean McFadden.

Stormy Water Ahead

Plans for the privatisation of Loch Katrine water are entering their final phase. Workers in Strathclyde Regional Council Water Department have been told of the change which is less than two years away.

Private companies are being formed and will take over as the regional water boards are abolished. As with gas and electricity, they have their eyes on huge profits which will be made at the expense of the poor and the needy.

In England where water

authorities are already in private hands people who cannot meet the massive bills are having their water supply cut off. Children are turning up at school unwashed and ridden with head lice because their parents cannot keep up with the exorbitant charges registered on tap meters. In the course of time there will be other far more serious effects on the health and welfare of those who cannot pay. We must make certain the same does not happen here.

As with the poll tax, we must organise now for the fight against the

monopolists who after gas and electricity are seeking to make large fortunes out of a natural resource which has always been free at the point of supply.

This is a fight the people can and must win. We should use the existing community-based anti-poll tax networks to spread awareness of the coming danger and mobilise resistance.

The water is ours. Let's keep it ours.

Justice for All

With a great bit of court-room silk the longest running murder trial in Glasgow came to an end after 54 days. Bombarded with front page exclusives on its underworld, the City was confronted with some very disturbing questions while the only proof that was established is that the mettle of the Law is clearly non-Ferris in the City of Culture.

After being cleared of all charges, Paul Ferris left the court to a champagne popping crowd that carried him off like a newly elected leader. He left behind a disquieted Procurator Fiscal's office and a bemused Police Force. Together they will have to answer for the methods and reasoning which led them to prosecute. But it's an answer they will never find as they, like all the other Authorities, fundamentally misunderstand the communities in which they operate.

The social conditions which foster crime, like poverty, unemployment and deprivation, being essential to our profit motivated economic system, have become a fixed feature in Glasgow's profile. Many communities remain unimpressed by the police and the courts as more and more people are forced to tolerate intermittent crime as a way of life. Youngsters always grew up to be hard in the poor and often brutish working-class areas of Glasgow, but too often they now become hardened criminals. Wherever endemic poverty exists side by side with material comfort and ostentatious wealth, economic crime will be a

natural part of society. Traditional targets get their property secured with sophisticated systems giving little opportunity for thieves who turn to muggings and High Street hold-ups to earn a living. Street-cred kids with their designer fashions find themselves wanting when they meet the street-tough toads who often rob them of their trendy-togs. Most of these attacks occur in the City-Centre, among the shadows of multi-storey car-parks, shopping complexes and the deserted, ill-lit no-go areas. Items of brand named fashion become economic currency among young folk, big-time shoplifters and distributors of stolen goods. Notwithstanding the damage that this kind of false economics does to the community, it comes nowhere near to the devastating effects of the disease it feeds; the drug economy.

Drug

Unless you have first-hand experience of the drug scene, your knowledge will be thinly impressionistic and probably derived from sensationalist journalism. At best you might read a report which, no matter how honest and in-depth, will have used inadequate research methods. Controlled by wealthy, criminal businessmen and their psychopathic enforcers, most folk are pushed or drift into the drug community. The common motives for people committing crime, as proposed by criminologists, are loss of attachment, investment and commitment to the culture in which

they live. However, by 1992 whole communities had been cut adrift from any genuine form of participation in wider society. Today, Glasgow is alive and kicking with an unprecedented level of bitterness and alienated anger.

Murder

In the sprawling schemes of hopelessness like Barlanark and Provanmill where Arthur Thompson Jnr. was murdered and two of the alleged killers shot dead, it's no surprise that violent forms of culture become established. A kind of schizophrenia develops which forces the people to relate, at the same time, to galloping lawlessness and a heavy level of Statutory-Authority intervention. To be a toad in the schemes of Glasgow in the 1990's means flirting with, and often taking life-membership out, in major criminal cultures. The drug-economy is the frontier of that malevolent morality. A gutter-culture that affects every house, poisoning family and community relationships and compelling users into serious crime.

With the hype of The Year Of Culture now washed down the Clyde, the real Glasgow once again becomes apparent. A City where the pile of poverty is only as high as the chasm between the have's and have-not's is wide. Like New York and Los Angeles, this divide is rapidly filling up with the violent crime that characterises societal breakdown. Concerned that this is damaging tourist figures, Kenneth Walton, of

the Greater Glasgow Tourist Board, gave his judgement on the Ferris Trial. He says, 'it's been a ten year process turning the image of the City around and this is just a 'blip'. This view is supported by Bob Palmer, Director of the Year Of Culture in 1990, who believes the reports of violence to be 'romantic mythology'. If this isn't testimony enough to get a conviction on grounds of moral negligence, it is certainly conclusive evidence that the City's administrators know very little about Glasgow.

War

The Queen's Councillor who defended Ferris would seem to have more knowledge of today's Glasgow than the City Councillors who are supposed to represent its people. As he toasted the system of criminal justice, the City Chambers were echoing to reminders of the real problem. As long as Westminster wages war against the young, the poor, and the unemployed, the communities in which they live will always be prey to the forces of violent crime. It is not the people's fault that we now live in post-industrial times but it will be outrageous negligence for Glasgow City Council not to take an aggressive stand on their behalf. Local Government is one of the very few genuine vehicles left for people's democracy and it has been missing in Glasgow for too long. Criminal justice is a crucial characteristic of a fair and democratic society but without social justice it is meaningless.

Praise the Lord and Pass the Paracetamol

The oleaginous councillor, the Reverend Stuart McQuarrie for Toryglen attended 'Chrome Day' at Rutherglen Burgh Hall on 26th April. The meeting organised by the action group, Cambuslang, Carmyle, Rutherglen Against Pollution (CCRAP) was to bring to the attention of the people of the area and their so-called representatives the hazard of toxic waste in the district.

The Rev. McQuarrie appeared early in the day and failed to stay for the debate. He smiled, he shook hands and made reassuring noises to the effect that he was keeping a close watch on the 'situation', then the oily vicar buggered off. At the meeting the area was described as a chemical Chernobyl and evacuation, not development was the only remedy.

Incidences of cancers, leukemias, miscarriages and asthmas in the district are far above the national average. In the May issue of the *Bulletin*, the District Council's version of *Pravda*, 'Greasy' McQuarrie is seen smiling, shaking hands and declaring his delight at the opening of a 'superb' new sport and leisure facility in Cambuslang. Half a million quid is being spent on a project that is being built on the most polluted land in Scotland.

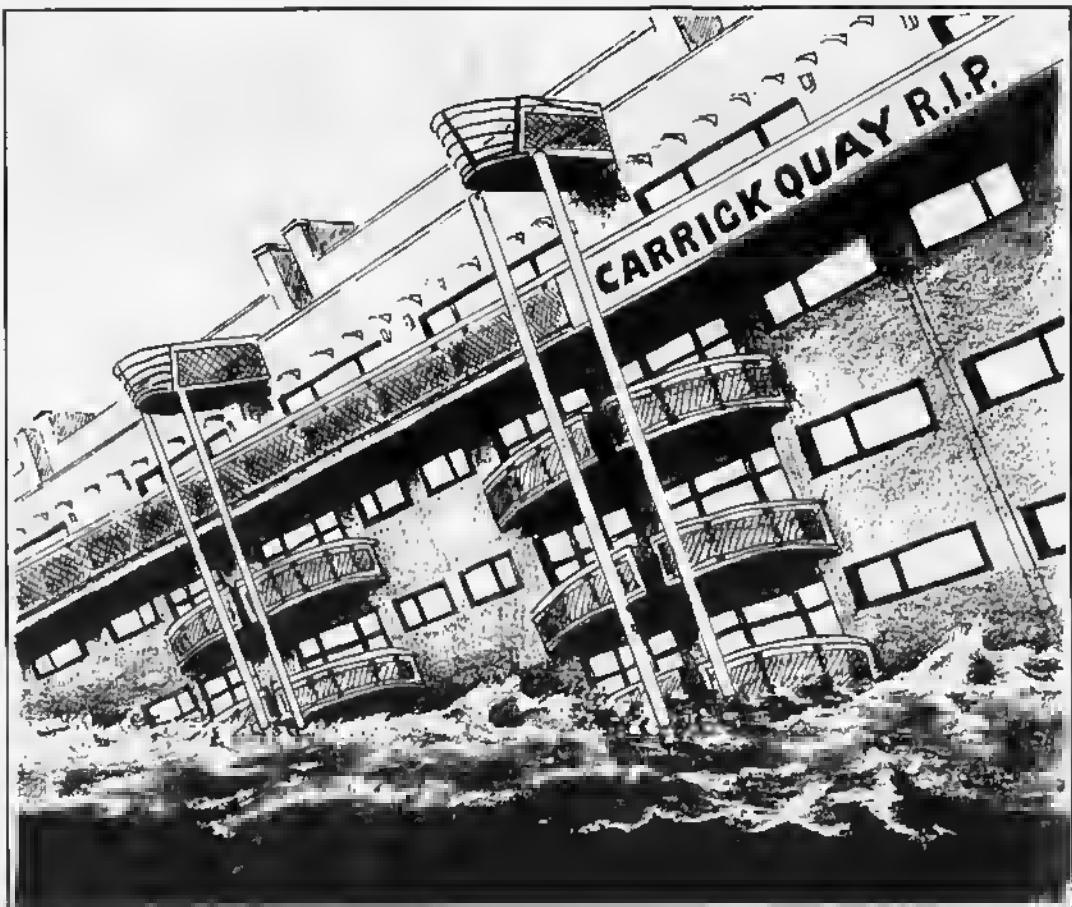
This is one of many 'developments' that have been thrown up in the area, that include houses, playparks and a maternity home. All of these projects have been given the go-ahead with total disregard to the Environmental Protection Act (1990), which expressly forbids any development that does not take into account residual environmental hazards.

But we are not to worry, this project has been given the blessing of the immoderately of the Church of Scotland, the divine McQuarrie. Perhaps the slick pastor should add to his reading of the *Sennon* on the Mount the message, *Blessed are they that are afflicted, for they shall be ignored*.

Flogging a Dead Horse

While great excitement was being whipped up for the beastly job of cleaning up Glasgow's industrial graveyards, like the River Clyde, very little thought was given to pollution.

Old cars and cans, bedsteads and prams, tyres, containers and soggy divans don't pollute, they litter the river bed or cling to the river bank. Like pied pipers, the clean-up campaigners led children to the rats which increasingly populate our waterways. Alive or dead these rats carry a whole range of diseases including some which can kill, such



● *Yuppie Nightmare: Commercial property prices in Glasgow have sunk from £13 to £6 per square foot.*

as Leptospirosis, better known as Weil's Disease.

More insidious, but no less dangerous, are the chemical pollutants which now form an integral part of the river system in Glasgow and its surrounding areas. All the way through Lanarkshire and down through Glasgow to the Clyde Coast, metal pollutants such as cadmium, chromium, lead and mercury are in great evidence. So too is the flotsam of rubbish dumping which includes used syringes and condoms both of which are dangerous disease vectors of the likes of AIDS and hepatitis. Emissions from the riverside distillery at the Gorbals include yeast which, as a live agent, is one of the most serious disease-carriers.

While the children should be applauded for their concern for the environment, their parents should check the liability of the company or authority involved in any future clean-ups. The fear of injury, disease and even death, is the reason that the workers on the dredgers operating on the Clyde work to a strict code of insurance and protection.

It is evidence enough that the river is polluted when they found the carcass of a dead horse among the live pollution.

It's bad enough taking a horse to the water to kick the bucket, but if they ever take your children again kick up a stink before it gets them.

Famous Glasgow Landmarks no. 69

The Pink Potier

You know the big pink office block on the Bridge to Nowhere that sits across the M8 at Charing Cross? The one that hangs over the Ritz Bar and blends in so well with Charing Cross Mansions it blots them out?

Well, Tay House, as the to let sign calls it, was built by Tanap Investments, which was owned, till it went into the voluntary liquidiser, by one Malcolm Potier, alias the Baron of Gigha.

He's the guy whose former island and its tied cottages are up for sale, which could put 200 islanders out on the beaches. He's now putting in a bid to buy them back from the Swiss bank who repossessed them from him.

It seems the Pink Potier slipped past our eagle-eyed city coonsillers on the planning committee by telling them it was to be occupied by Standard Growth Fund. You can just see the coonsillers' eyes glazing over, the ones that were open that is.

Only it turns out that Standard Growth Fund is a fictitious offshore company, whose registered office is an empty beach hut in the Bahamas, owned by ... you got it, Malcolm Potier.

The Pink Potier is up for sale as well now, but like all the other empty office blocks in Glasgow, our homeless islanders are already locked out.

What's the betting Baron Potier buys it back for half the price and turns it into a museum of modern art?

Janey Buchan, MEP, wrote a vicious letter in the Glasgow Herald attacking non-payers of the poll tax. Here is a reply that the Herald failed to publish.

Dear Editor,
Talking about "Political Prisoners" (13/5/92) I know very few Labour Party speakers (except perhaps the garrulous Dewar) who can hold a candle to Janey Buchan MEP for what she calls in her uppity contemptuous manner, 'Blethering Rubbish'. This use of the occasional Lallans word is surely the only indication that Janey is Scottish; her blustering energies are devoted to that London-controlled, right-wing sham Labour Party which has scuppered the once glorious Red Banner and replaced it with a very English rose from a chocolate box. (Expensive and dainty and so ephemeral, isn't it?)

Janey does not merely blether! She has made a career of it; she does not converse with anyone on equal terms but stretches her infallibility in one prissy monologue out to infinity. Two Parliamentary salaries for decades in the one family has raised the superior Janey to such lofty heights that a mere few hundred pounds in Poll Tax are just coppers to her. She is aghast at Tommy Sheridan being regarded as a 'political prisoner'. Her heroes and martyrs must be internationally acclaimed and preferably have the stamp of approval of the 'Labour' Party in London or at least Pat Lally. One thing for certain, Janey had no intention of being a political prisoner, local or international. As the saying goes, she 'knows which side her bread is buttered on'.

Yours Truly
Freddy Anderson

THE GREAT DICTATORS

In the last *Keelie* we mentioned a little organisation called the Glasgow Development Agency (GDA). They have a parent body called Scottish Enterprise (SE) who in turn are influenced by the CBI.

These groups are the real controllers of the 'cultural re-development' of Glasgow. The SE has a budget of £400 million, a staff of 1,400 and its head office is at 120 Bothwell Street. Drop in some time and ask to see its Chairman, Sir David Nickson. If he's not too busy counting his money from his directorships of the Clydesdale Bank, General Accident and Scottish & Newcastle Breweries (who alone, last year made a profit of £216.8 million) perhaps he'll answer your questions on why a cartel of business moguls are running local government policy.

Tell him you've been comparing the business interests of the directors of the CBI, SE and GDA and have found out some funny things. For instance: Tom Johnston of the Bank of Scotland and the GDA is on the board of Barr and Stroud owned by Pilkington's Glass (a highly successful company who've just sacked thousands of their employees to keep profits high) and so is Sir Peter Thompson of the CBI.

Since Pilkington's biggest customer is the building industry, say you've become a little worried about how Pilkington's got the contract to make a fortune on all those glass pyramids, offices and leisure centres that have been springing up all over Glasgow. You'll have to ask Sir David personally because you won't be reading any investigative journalism on the cut-off of Glasgow in the *Herald* or the *Evening Times*. They've just been bought out by a consortium of banks (the Royal Bank of Scotland, Flemings and venture capitalists 3i, who themselves are owned by the high street banks: Bank of Scotland 14.7%, Royal Bank 7.42% etc) and as the *Times* proudly said to its readers on May 11th, "Executives of the new look Outram company will be answerable only to banking and business interests which put up the cash for the £75 million management buy-out from previous owners Lonrho". The very banks represented on either the CBI (Sir Brian Corby of the Bank of England) SE or GDA, who also have Ian Irvine of Outram and Universal Newspapers Ltd on Board.

You'll also have to add that you don't expect to see or hear anything about these funny deals on Radio Clyde or STV because William Brown of the GDA has a top advisors role on Clyde and is deputy chair of Scottish Television Inc. If Sir David gives you any lip about any of this tell him you also know that Sir Anthony Pilkington (guess



what company he owns) is on the board of BP, who are buggering off from Glasgow and that it could be made to look bad for two 'leaders' of organisations who are supposed to be leading economic development, to be so closely associated with the bastards who run BP, mainly because they're liable to be just the same.

You could mention too that Pilkington is on the board of the Natwest Bank who, aside from handling Third World debt, seem to be the only company in the world who ended up actually *having* any of Robert Maxwell's stolen money. Surprise, surprise, there's also a few pension fund 'handlers' on the CBI, SE and GDA.

If he was honest what you'd be told by Sir David is that he's happy to admit that the GDA, SE and CBI are representatives from, and interlinked to the top UK companies - Great Britain plc as they call it - and their plans for becoming a permanent government are nothing new. They are the state and since local government is either corrupt or spectacularly corrupt there's unlikely to be any resistance to the final development of their seven basic strategic priorities for control, which are 1) Human capital investment

- 2) Technology
- 3) Competitiveness
- 4) Internationalism
- 5) Access to capital resources
- 6) Project development
- 7) The environment.

Sir David (if he'd swallowed an honesty pill) would also add that in Glasgow the plans for domination of these things go back to the early 80's when with nonsense such as *Glasgow's Miles Better*, they tried to convince first Glaswegians, that a 'partnership' between business and local government was a good idea. Then with the Garden Festival they demonstrated to their English business partners how easy it was to manipulate the councils and the locals, then with the year of culture, they could show off to the whole of Europe that it was open season for exploitation.

This 'partnership' with local government is now fully evolved, big business don't have to bother bribing a councillor or lobbying central government: they can just trample right over any restriction and divide things up amongst themselves locally.

Now with the fall-out between the financial sectors and the Tory party after all the scandals, too much court action and laws are being brought into the scene to make the Thatcher boom era seem anything other than another catastrophe. The new head of the CBI, Colin Davis is an ex-Treasury man who plans to talk the DTI's new head, Michael (the businessman's friend) Heseltine into adopting a light-weight 'corporatism' by secretly involving local government.

Michael Heseltine is all for closer involvement of state, capital and local government through enterprise boards, economic development committees and the CBI: indeed it was Heseltine who started up the process through such successful ventures as the Docklands and the Garden Festivals.

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